



STRESS MANAGEMENT

KENTUCKY EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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SERVING THE PEOPLE WHO SERVE THE PEOPLE

The Kentucky Employee Assistance Program (K.E.A.P.) is dedicated to helping employees find solutions to the personal problems that may hinder their work performance. Here are some suggestions they have in helping you manage stress.

Stress is *the body's reaction to real or imagined threats*. Some stress can be positive. A moderate amount of stress over a short amount of time may help us to perform better when we need to. It is when we are exposed to stress over a long period of time without relief that our health begins to suffer.

To manage current stressors have a Stress Management Tool Belt – stress management techniques that are immediately available for use.

Stress Management Tool Belt

1. Relaxation

Being able to relax is the fundamental foundation skill for stress management. There are a variety of relaxation techniques including prayer, meditation and progressive muscle relaxation. Find one that works for you and be prepared to use it. A simple, effective and always available technique is Deep Breathing. Try it. It works.

Deep Breathing - Inhale slowly through your nose, pushing your stomach out to bring air deep into your lungs. Hold for a count of five. Push the air out very slowly through your mouth.

2. Exercise

Experts agree that exercise is one of the best remedies for stress. We all know it. The bottom line is to break down the barriers that prevent you from doing it. If a barrier is time – use your morning and afternoon breaks. If your barrier is you forget – schedule it in to your appointment book. If you need encouragement – enlist a friend or co-worker.

3. Putting Stressors into perspective

When a stressor hits don't automatically go into "catastrophe" mode. Instead think, "Is this really horrific? Is this worth a response? Are my thoughts about this healthy?" Replace the unhealthy thoughts with more healthy thinking.

4. Problem solving

Rather than getting stuck in the emotionality of a stressor become solution focused. Brainstorm possible solutions to the stress then pick the best option.

5. Leaving/removing

Removing yourself from a stressful situation is a legitimate stress management technique. Take 10. Take a walk. Give yourself a chance to calm down and think about how you want to respond in the stressful situation. In most cases you should go back and revisit the issue. In some cases, after careful decision making, you may need to more totally remove yourself from the stressful event/job/relationship.

Stress *can* be managed. Having tools readily available to manage your stress is key. For more information on this topic, please attend [K.E.A.P.](#)'s workshop Stress Management.



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